

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5     1.     An apparatus for temporarily disabling an alarm system, the system formed of one or more alarm units, the apparatus comprising:  
            a switch coupled to a main power line carrying power from an external power source to the alarm system; and  
            an actuator coupled to the switch and responsive to user operation by  
10     changing the switch from a first position to a second position for a predetermined length of time such that power discontinues to flow across the main power line to the alarm system and disables the alarm system for the predetermined length of time;  
            after the predetermined length of time, the switch changes to a position  
15     that returns flow of power between the main power line and the alarm system.
2.     The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the alarm system is formed of a series of two or more alarm units electrically coupled together.
- 20     3.     The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the switch is normally in a closed position for the first position and allows power to flow from the external power source to the alarm system.
4.     The apparatus as claimed in Claim 3 wherein after the predetermined length of  
25     time, the switch returns to the closed position.
5.     The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the switch includes:  
            a relay coupled to the main power line;  
            a transistor coupled to the relay; and

5 a capacitor electrically coupled to the transistor, the capacitor being responsive to the actuator such that user operation of the actuator charges the capacitor, the charged capacitor providing current to the transistor and enabling the transistor to open the relay on the main power line for the predetermined length of time until a threshold amount of charge is bled from the capacitor.

6. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 5 wherein the capacitor value determines the predetermined length of time.

10 7. A method for temporarily disabling an alarm system comprising the steps of:  
providing a switch coupled to a main power line carrying power from an external power source to the alarm system;  
enabling changing of the switch from a first position to a second position for a predetermined length of time such that said changing switch position  
15 discontinues flow of power across the main power line to the alarm system and disables the alarm system for the predetermined length of time; and  
after the predetermined length of time, automatically changing the switch to a position that enables power to return to flow between the main power line and the alarm system.

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8. The method as claimed in Claim 7 wherein changing the switch comprises the steps of:

charging a capacitor;  
applying current provided by the charged capacitor to the base of a  
25 transistor to cause the transistor to conduct; and  
activating a relay coupled to the main power line to change from a closed position to an open position on the main power line, such that power discontinues to flow across the main power line to the alarm system;

9. The method as claimed in Claim 8 wherein the step of automatically changing the switch includes:  
bleeding the capacitor until the capacitor supplies insufficient voltage to cause the transistor to conduct; and  
5 deactivating the relay such that the relay changes from the opened position to the closed position on the main power line.
10. The method as claimed in Claim 8 wherein the capacitor value determines the predetermined length of time.
- 10 11. The method as claimed in Claim 7 wherein the step of automatically changing the switch includes returning the switch to the first position.
12. The method as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the first position of the switch is a  
15 normally closed position.
13. An alarm system comprising:  
one or more alarm units, each alarm unit coupled to a switch such that there are one or more switches;  
20 an external power source, each switch being coupled to the external power sources to provide power to the respective alarm unit; and  
means for temporarily disabling simultaneously each alarm unit through the one or more switches.
- 25 14. The alarm system as claimed in Claim 13 further comprising one or more actuators coupled to the one or more switches and responsive to user operation by actuating the means.
- 15 15. The alarm system as claimed in Claim 13 wherein the means changes the one or more switches from a closed position to an open position for a predetermined
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length of time such that power discontinues to flow from the external power source to each alarm unit and disables each alarm unit for the predetermined length of time.

- 5    16.    The alarm system as claimed in Claim 15 wherein at least one of the switches is normally in a closed position and allows power to flow from the external power source to the one or more alarm units.